HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY HARRY CHRISTOPHERS
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



# HANDEL MESSIAH

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#### WELCOME TO HANDEL MESSIAH

Welcome to the Handel and Haydn Society's 159th annual performance of Handel's *Messiah*, a work integral to our rich musical history. H&H first performed selections from the work at its inaugural concert on December 25, 1815, and gave the first complete performance in the US in 1818. Since 1854, H&H has performed *Messiah* annually, providing Boston with one of its oldest and best holiday traditions.

H&H will celebrate its Bicentennial in 2015, a fantastic opportunity for the organization to celebrate both its heritage and the people of Boston, who have contributed to making the city a leading cultural center. In October, H&H's Board approved a new, fiveyear strategic plan that focuses on nurturing audiences and professional musicians of the future while investing in high-quality, innovative programming that enriches our communities today. I want to thank all of you who participated in this project; the process was eye-opening and rewarding, and illustrated the importance of our community to the health and vibrancy of H&H. The plan is available on our website at handelandhaydn.org/drop/strategic-plan.pdf, and l look forward to your involvement as we move ahead with these initiatives.

Your loyalty has made nearly 200 years of music at H&H possible, and will continue to make the music come alive for future generations. As we celebrate our past, we must also invest in our future. Please consider making a year-end gift to help support our artistic and educational initiatives. Your contribution allows H&H to provide exceptional concerts and effective outreach that help make Boston a culturally vibrant city. To make a gift, or for more information, contact Emily Yoder Reed, Assistant Director of Development, at ereed@handelandhaydn.org or 617 262 1815.

I look forward to sharing many more years of *Messiah* with you as we move into a bright future with H&H.

Happy holidays,

Nicholas Glausteen
Chairman of the Board

PHOTO: GRETJENHELENE.COM COVER PHOTO: PAUL SAPIANO



#### **ABOUT THE HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY**

Founded in Boston in 1815, the Handel and Haydn Society (H&H) is considered America's oldest continuously performing arts organization and will celebrate its Bicentennial in 2015. Under Artistic Director Harry Christophers' leadership, H&H's mission is to enrich life and influence culture by performing Baroque and Classical music at the highest levels of artistic excellence, and by providing engaging, accessible, and broadly inclusive music education and training activities. H&H's Period Instrument Orchestra and Chorus present live and recorded historically informed performances of this repertoire in ways that stimulate the musical and cultural development of our Greater Boston community and contemporary audiences across the nation and beyond.

H&H's esteemed tradition of innovation and excellence began in the 19th century with the US premieres of Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Verdi's *Requiem*, and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. Today, H&H is widely known through its concert series, tours, local and national broadcasts, and recordings. Its nine-program series is held at Symphony and Jordan Halls in Boston and Sanders Theatre in Cambridge. H&H's first recording with Harry Christophers, Mozart Mass in C Minor, was issued in September 2010 on the CORO label, followed by Mozart *Requiem* in September 2011 and Mozart *Coronation Mass* in 2012.

As a 21st-century performing arts organization, H&H's primary roles are to perform and educate, and to serve as a resource center and community partner. Its Karen S. and George D. Levy Educational Outreach Program, established in 1985, reaches 10,000 children each year in underserved Greater Boston communities. H&H also maintains partnerships with cultural and higher education institutions. It offers college students opportunities to learn about and perform Baroque and Classical music; presents public programming at libraries, community centers, and museums; and hosts free lectures and symposia.

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### ARTISTIC DIRECTOR HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

The 2012–2013 Season marks Harry Christophers' fourth as Artistic Director of the Handel and Haydn Society. Appointed in 2008, he began his tenure with the 2009–2010 Season and has conducted Handel and Haydn each season since September 2006, when he led a sold-out performance in the Esterházy Palace at the Haydn Festival in Eisenstadt, Austria. Christophers and H&H have since embarked on an ambitious artistic journey that began with the 2010–2011 Season with a showcase of works premiered in the United States by the Handel and Haydn Society over the last 198 years, and the release of the first three of a series of recordings on CORO leading to the 2015 Bicentennial.

Christophers is known internationally as founder and conductor of the UK-based choir and period instrument ensemble The Sixteen. He has directed The Sixteen throughout Europe, America, Australia, and the Far East, gaining a distinguished reputation for his work in Renaissance, Baroque, and 20th-century music. In 2000, he instituted the Choral Pilgrimage, a tour of British cathedrals from York to Canterbury. He has recorded over 100 titles for which he has won numerous awards, including a *Grand Prix du Disque* for Handel *Messiah*, numerous *Preise der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik* (German Record Critics Awards), the coveted Gramophone Award for Early Music, and the prestigious Classical Brit Award (2005) for his disc entitled *Renaissance*. In 2009, he received one of classical music's highest accolades, the Classic FM Gramophone Awards Artist of the Year Award. The Sixteen won the Baroque Vocal Award for Handel *Coronation Anthems*, a CD that also received a 2010 Grammy Award nomination.

Christophers is Principal Guest Conductor of the Granada Symphony Orchestra and a regular guest conductor with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields. In addition to performing on the concert stage, he continues to lend his artistic direction to opera. In 2006, Mozart's anniversary year, he conducted Mozart's *Mitridate* for the Granada Festival, and after outstanding success at Buxton Opera in past seasons, he returned in 2012 to conduct Handel's *Jephtha*. Previous productions include Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and Purcell's *King Arthur* for Lisbon Opera, Monteverdi's *Poppea*, Gluck's *Orfeo*, and Handel's *Ariodante* for English National Opera, and the UK premiere of Messager's *Fortunio* for Grange Park Opera.

Christophers is an Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and also of the Royal Welsh Academy. In October 2008, he was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Music from the University of Leicester. He received a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) from the Queen of England in 2012 for services to music.

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### ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S NOTE HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

We are now in the Advent season and tradition dictates it is time for Handel's Messiah. This outstanding work has survived the test of time and, in particular, those countless years when Baroque conventions were ignored and replaced by gross romanticisms. Quite frankly, it took a long time for scholarship to take note and restore those conventions. Thankfully, over the past few decades, scholars and musicians have been hard at work and made a much-needed reassessment of performance practice. Messiah, ever a flagship for worthy causes, has been at the forefront of these efforts.

What makes Messiah so amazing is its uniqueness. It is unique among all Handel's oratorios because it is the only one with text solely from the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. It has an inspired libretto by Charles Jennens; instead of telling a dramatic story, Messiah is concerned with prophecy and meditation, with almost no narrative. When listening to our performance, take note of Jennens' amazing contribution. We need only look back to medieval carols, in which texts take us from Christ's Nativity through his crucifixion and resurrection, but Jennens takes us further. His is a unique journey which takes us from the prophecies of Christ's coming, through the Nativity to Christ's suffering, resurrection, ascension to the Kingdom of God, and finally to that amazing and jubilant epilogue celebrating Christ's redemption and immortality.

Of course it is the chorus who has the bulk of the work to do, but spare a thought for the strings, who have only one short duet off all night! Each performance is unique, and one reason for that rests with the soloists. I am delighted to welcome back Karina Gauvin, Daniel Taylor, James Gilchrist, and Sumner Thompson. I immensely enjoy their individual insights; we talk through ideas and then it is up to me to mould it into an experience.

I have no doubt that Handel was even more inspired than usual when composing *Messiah*, and I hope that today we will do justice to this most exceptional of Baroque masterpieces in a rendition that is both faithful to Baroque conventions and inspirational for you, the listener.



PHOTO: MARCO BORGGREY

#### PROGRAM HANDEL *MESSIAH*



November 30, 2012 at 7.30pm December 1, 2012 at 3pm December 2, 2012 at 3pm Symphony Hall

Harry Christophers, conductor

Karina Gauvin, soprano Daniel Taylor, countertenor James Gilchrist, tenor Sumner Thompson, baritone

#### Messiah

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Part the First

INTERMISSION

Part the Second

**BRIEF PAUSE** 

Part the Third

#### RELATED EVENTS

#### Holiday Caroling with the Vocal Apprenticeship Program

November 30, 2012 at 6.50pm • Young Women's Chorus December 1, 2012 at 2.20pm • Young Men's Chorus December 2, 2012 at 2.20pm • Youth Chorus Locations throughout Symphony Hall

After caroling throughout Symphony Hall, students from H&H's Educational Outreach Program will carol from the stage 15 minutes before the start of each concert.

#### BROADCAST

The Sunday, December 2, 2012 performance of Handel *Messiah* will be broadcast live on 99.5 Classical New England, a service of WGBH. *Broadcasts are generously underwritten by Howard & Darcy Fuguet* 

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This program is underwritten by Mr. & Mrs. Wat H. Tyler

### The artists' appearances are made possible by the generous support of the following individuals:

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Special thanks to Boston Private Bank & Trust Company for additional support for the guest artists for the December 1 performance.



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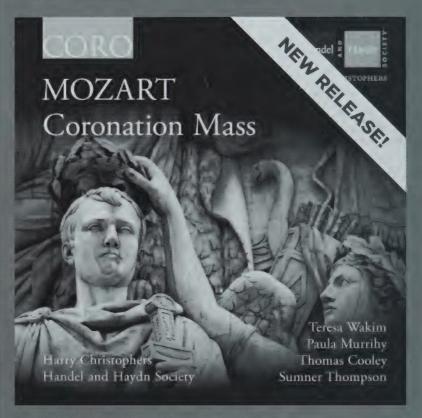
The concert runs for approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes, including intermission.

Food and beverages are not permitted inside the hall.

Handel and Haydn Society is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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#### **ARTIST PROFILES**

#### Karina Gauvin, soprano



Soprano Karina
Gauvin last
performed with the
Handel and Haydn
Society in Haydn's
The Seasons at
Symphony Hall in
2007. Gauvin has
impressed audiences
and critics the world
over with her luscious
timbre, profound
musicality, and wide
vocal range. Her
repertoire ranges

from the music of Johann Sebastian Bach to Luciano Berio. She has sung with many major orchestras, including the Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Musica Antiqua Köln, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, and Les Violons du Roy.

Among her many career highlights figure Mozart's Requiem and Bach's Magnificat with the Chicago Symphony under Helmuth Rilling, and her Carnegie Hall debut in Bach's Mass in B Minor under the baton of Peter Schreier. She performed lole in Handel's Hercules with Akademie für alte Musik Berlin, Euridice in Gluck's Orphée with Les Violons du Roy, and Alcina in Handel's eponymous opera with the Gabrieli Consort at the Beaune Festival in France.

A prolific recording artist with 19 releases to her credit, Gauvin won the Juno award for recordings of Handel's *Silete Venti/Apollo e Daphne* and Mozart's *Requiem* with Les Violons du Roy. Among other impressive projects are debut recordings on Deutsche Grammophon of Handel's operas *Tolomeo, Alcina, Ezio,* and *Agrippina* with Alan Curtis and Complesso Barocco.

Gauvin won First Prize at the CBC Young Performers Competition and received the Lieder and Public's prize at the s'Hertogenbosch International Vocal Competition in the Netherlands. In 2000, she was honored with the Opus Award as Performer of the Year. A graduate of the Montréal Conservatory of Music, Gauvin studied with Marie Daveluy and pursued postgraduate studies with Pamela Bowden at the Royal Scottish Academy in Glasgow.

#### Daniel Taylor, countertenor

Countertenor Daniel Taylor last performed with the Handel and Haydn Society in Handel's *Messiah* in 2009. An exclusive recording artist for Sony Classical Masterworks, Taylor is one of

the most sought-after countertenors in the world and recognized as Canada's finest. He appears on more than 100 recordings on Sony, DG Archiv, Decca, Harmonia Mundi, BIS, Analekta, Teldec, Erato, and Universal. Taylor has performed with the New York Metropolitan Opera, Glyndebourne, Rome Opera, San Francisco Opera. Montréal Opera,



Canadian Opera, at the Edinburgh Festival, and at the Royal Albert Hall/BBC Proms. He recently took a role in the world premiere of Robert Lepage's staging of Adès' *The Tempest*. He works with the Tonhalle Zürich, Toronto, Rotterdam, St. Louis, and Cleveland Orchestras. In recital, he has sung at Wigmore Hall, in Beijing, in Barcelona, and across North America. He sang on Parliament Hill for Queen Elizabeth and the Prime Minister of Canada.

Taylor is a Professor of Voice and Head of Early Music at the University of Toronto, Visiting Professor at the University of Ottawa, and Artist-in-Residence at the Opéra de Montréal. He is Artistic Director and Conductor of the Choir and Orchestra of the Theatre of Early Music. The Theatre of Early Music performs more than 30 concerts each year in concert halls all over the world. He is also Artistic Director of the Québec International Festival of Sacred Music.

#### James Gilchrist, tenor

Tenor James Gilchrist last performed with the Handel and Haydn Society in Haydn's *The Seasons* at Royal Albert Hall in London in 2007. Gilchrist began his working life as a doctor, turning to a full-time career in music in 1996. Recent highlights include *St. Matthew Passion* (Rotterdam Philharmonic), *The Seasons* (Royal Flemish Philharmonic), Britten's *Les Illuminations* 

(Aldeburgh festival), La Finta Giardiniera (Academy of Ancient Music), and Britten Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings (Amsterdam Sinfonietta). Gilchrist works regularly with the Academy of Ancient Music, the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra, The Sixteen, and the King's Consort.

Gilchrist's operatic roles include Quint in Britten's *Turn of the Screw*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, and Purcell's *King Arthur* with Mark Morris at English National Opera.

A prolific recitalist, Gilchrist enjoys successful relationships with accompanists Anna Tilbrook, Julius Drake, and harpist Alison Nicholls. His many critically acclaimed recordings include *Die schöne Müllerin, Schwanengesang,* and *Winterreise* for Orchid, Handel's *Jephtha* with Fabio Biondi (BIS), *Intimations of Immortality* for Naxos, the title role *Albert Herring* and Vaughan William's *A Poisoned Kiss* 

for Chandos, Leighton's Earth, Sweet Earth, Vaughan Williams' On Wenlock Edge, Britten's Winter Words, and My Beloved is Mine - Britten Song Cycles for Linn.

Forthcoming engagements include performances of *Messiah* with the Sixteen and with the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra. He will tour Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra and will sing Madwoman (*Curlew River*), Nebuchadnezzar (*The Burning Fiery Furnace*), and Tempter/ Abbot (*The Prodigal Son*) in Britten's *Church Parables*, with performances in St. Petersburg, London, and at the Aldeburgh Festival.

#### Sumner Thompson, baritone

Baritone Sumner Thompson last performed with the Handel and Haydn Society in Mozart's Coronation Mass in April 2012. He has appeared as a soloist with many leading ensembles, including the Britten-Pears Orchestra, the National Symphony, the Boston Early Music Festival, Apollo's Fire, Pacific Baroque Orchestra, Les Boréades de Montréal. Mercury Baroque, Les Voix Baroques, Boston Baroque, and Tafelmusik.

Recent engagements include Bach's St. John Passion with Orchestra lowa and with Switzerland's gliangeli baroque, Britten's War Requiem with the New England Philharmonic, a return to Early Music Vancouver's summer festival with Les Voix Baroques, Messiah with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, and Monteverdi's 1610



Vespers with the critically acclaimed Green Mountain Project. Thompson can be heard on the Boston Early Music Festival's Grammy-nominated recording of Lully's Psyché on the CPO label, and also with Les Voix Baroques on Canticum Canticorum, Carissimi Oratorios, and Humori, all on the ATMA label.

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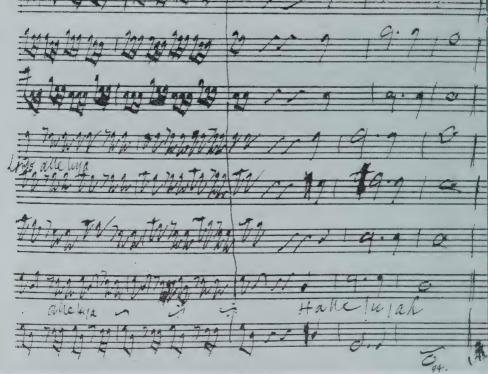
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FINAL BARS OF THE "HALLELUJAH" CHORUS FROM HANDEL'S OWN MANUSCRIP

### PROGRAM NOTES AN ENDURING LEGACY

Messiah achieved the status of cultural icon during Handel's lifetime and its impact has not diminished since the composer's death. With a history so rich and far-reaching, it is hard to imagine that the oratorio caused a scandal in London. Even in Dublin there were obstacles to the first performance.

In a letter to a friend dated July 10, 1741, Charles Jennens, who had supplied Handel with texts for other oratorios, explains that he sent this collection of scriptural passages to Handel in the hope that the composer would set it. Jennens' assembled text, from the Old and New Testaments, does not tell a continuous story; rather, the text refers to the prophecy and birth of Christ (part 1), his death and resurrection (part 2), and the redemption and response of the believer (part 3).

Although Italy was the birthplace of the oratorio, Messiah and other Handel oratorios ensured the genre's place in the history of music. The term oratorio originally referred to the building in Rome in which the faithful observed spiritual devotions, and then was used to describe the music performed as part of these services. Handel composed his first oratorio, La Resurrezione, while in Rome in 1708. In England, Handel returned to oratorio composition in the 1730s and 1740s. This time, however, he did not write in the Italian style, but fused the dramatic writing he had perfected in his operas with the English tradition of choral anthems.

In London in the early 1740s, Handel's popularity as an opera composer was waning. It was during this time that two fortuitous events occurred:

Jennens sent Handel the word book for Messiah and William Cavendish, the Duke of Devonshire and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, invited Handel to Dublin to participate in a season of oratorio concerts to benefit local charities. Handel seized the opportunity to present his works and set Jennens' text in just 24 days. Dublin was a major cultural center at this time and received Handel with open arms. Anticipation for Handel's new oratorio ran so high that an announcement in the Dublin Journal requested that ladies "would be pleased to come without hoops [in their skirts] ... making room for more company."

In January 1742, the deans of St. Patrick's Church and Christ Church, Dublin, were asked to allow their choir members to participate in what would be the premiere performance of Messiah. Christ Church agreed and at first it seemed that St. Patrick's Church concurred, However, the dean of St. Patrick's, Jonathan Swift, then revoked permission, claiming never to have granted it in the first place. This turn of events was potentially disastrous because both churches had to agree in order for the performance to proceed. Eventually, Swift did agree and the work was premiered in Dublin at the Music Hall on Fishamble Street on April 13, 1742.

Handel returned to London and, in 1743, gave that city's premiere of A Sacred Oratorio: he refrained from titling the work Messiah because of objections to the use of Biblical texts in a concert setting. Some of these complaints were voiced in the press on the same day the work was advertised. An anonymous letter to the Universal Spectator raised concerns about the use of Biblical texts and the propriety of theater performers. whose morals were assumed to be questionable, singing these sacred texts: "I ask if the Playhouse is a fit Temple to perform it [A Sacred Oratorio] in, or a Company of Players fit Ministers of God's Word."

These first London performances were not as successful as those in Ireland; however, beginning with a 1750 concert to benefit the Foundling Hospital, *Messiah* 



#### Hallelujah: To stand or not to stand?

The story goes that at one of the first performances of *Messiah* in London in 1743, King George II was so moved by the "Hallelujah" chorus that he sprung to his feet. In deference to their sovereign, the crowd was obliged to rise along with the king, and all remained standing through the end of the chorus. This sparked a tradition of standing for the "Hallelujah" chorus.

It is a tradition that has survived centuries. Joseph Haydn is said to have participated during a visit to London. Throughout the world, audiences regularly take to their feet at the opening bars of the "Hallelujah" chorus.

As it often goes with traditions. however, the true story remains unclear. There is not much evidence that anything like that actually happened in 1743. The first mention of the tradition came in 1780, nearly 40 years after it was said to have started. There are a great deal of first-hand accounts of Messiah performances from Handel's lifetime, but none refers to the audience rising en masse for the "Halleluiah" chorus. In recent decades, a number of conductors-including Robert Shaw and Christopher Hogwoodhave argued against the tradition, suggesting it is a distraction from Handel's powerful opening to the chorus.

Both practices remain very common among Boston's music lovers. We invite you to make your own choice on how to honor Handel's outstanding musical legacy.

# Wishing the Handel & Haydn Society the best with your 2012-2013 Season!

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203 Middlesex Turnpike, Burlington, MA 01803 781-229-1500 fax 781-229-1510 www.thegraphicgroup.com performances became annual events in London. Objections to Handel's sacred oratorio had subsided and were replaced with descriptions similar to that written by Miss Catherine Talbot in 1756: "The only public place I have been to this winter was to hear the *Messiah*, nor can there be a nobler entertainment." Soon, performances of the oratorio were mounted in the Old and New Worlds.

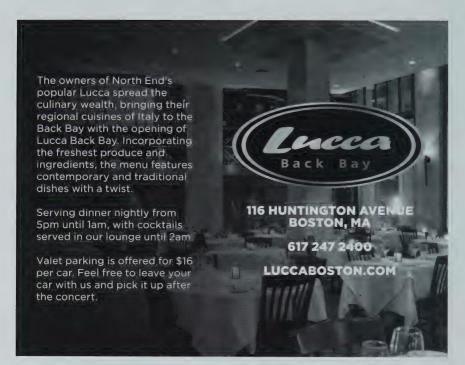
For the 1742 premiere of Messiah in Dublin, it is estimated that Handel had a combined ensemble of about 50 performers, with almost the same number of vocalists as instrumentalists. Experienced singers from the better church choirs made up the chorus, and two different soloists shared the roles for each voice part. While the chorus had no female singers, the soprano and alto solo parts were sung by women. For this performance, Handel may have reworked several soprano solos for Mrs. Susanna Cibber, a well-known actress and alto. One story relates that Mrs. Cibber's performance of "He was despised" was so moving that one person in the audience shouted, "For this thy sins be forgiven!"

For the London performances, Handel had more singers available to him. He continued to divide the solo numbers between two soloists who would have sung the choruses. After Handel's death, *Messiah* performances generally followed a similar pattern. In 1771, at one of the regular performances to benefit the Foundling Hospital, the professional chorus of 30 was augmented by 26 volunteer singers. This is the first known performance of *Messiah* with a volunteer chorus and the first time the chorus was significantly larger than the orchestra.

The trend of larger choruses, and eventually a larger orchestra to match it, reached new heights with a Westminster Abbey performance of *Messiah* in 1784. The organizers of this Handel tribute, a five-day festival, wanted to mount performances "on such a scale of magnificence, as could not be equaled in any part of the world." They achieved this goal by assembling over 250 singers and a matching number of instrumentalists.

#### The First 100 Years of Messiah

- 1741 Charles Jennens sends Handel the word book for *Messiah*.
  - Handel composes the oratorio between Saturday, August 22 and Monday, September 14. Some music is adapted from other works.
- 1742 Dublin premiere with a combined ensemble of about 50 singers and players. The concert benefits three charities (Relief of the Prisoners in several Gaols, the Support of Mercer's Hospital in Stephen's Street, and the Charitable Infirmary on the Inns Quay). The oratorio continues to be performed in Dublin, often during the Christmas season.
- 1743 First London performance, at Covent Garden. Handel titles the work A Sacred Oratorio to quell objections from the clerical community.
- 1745 First London performance using the title *Messiah*.
- 1750 First performance to benefit the Foundling Hospital for the Maintenance and Education of Exposed and Deserted Young Children, founded in 1740 by Captain Thomas Coram, known today as The Thomas Coram Foundation. Handel conducts Messiah annually at the Foundling Hospital for the remainder of his life. Handel conducts from the organ and performs organ concertos during the intermissions.
- 1770 Overture and 16 numbers performed in New York.
- 1773 Portions performed at Boston's Faneuil Hall in honor of King George III.
- 1784 First Handel commemoration at Westminster Abbey, including two performances of *Messiah*. With about 600 performers, this is the beginning of large-scale *Messiah* performances.
- 1786 Selections sung at concerts in Philadelphia, Boston, New York, and Charleston.
- 1789 Mozart creates an updated version for performance in Vienna by the Gesellschaft der Associierten Cavaliere.
- 1803 First performance in Halle, Handel's birthplace.
- 1815 Handel and Haydn Society performs selections from *Messiah* in its first public performance at King's Chapel in Boston.
- 1818 Handel and Haydn Society gives the first performance of the complete *Messiah* in the United States on December 25.
- **1857** Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale, sings *Messiah* in Halle.





The accuracy of playing impressed music chronicler Charles Burney, who wrote, "When all the wheels of that huge machine, the Orchestra, were in motion, the effect resembled a clock-work in everything, but want of feeling and expression."

The excitement generated by Messiah at the 1784 Handel Commemoration inspired other responses as well. Reverend John Newton, Rector of St. Mary, Woolnorth in London, based a series of 50 sermons on the texts of the oratorio, collectively titled Expository Discourses on the Series of Scriptural Passages which form the subject of the Celebrated Oratorio of Handel. Newton. who was no lover of Handel's music and who felt that the oratorio trivialized scripture to a certain extent, concluded his sermons by suggesting "that the next time you hear the Messiah, God may bring something that you have heard in the course of these sermons ... to your remembrance." Still others held a different view, such as Abigail Adams, in reaction to a performance of Messiah in 1785 (see "Lasting Impressions of Messiah").

The enduring appeal of *Messiah* lies in the sum of its parts; each solo or chorus is beautiful on its own, but together the numbers create a whole that speaks to each individual in a unique way. Although Jennens, too, expressed disappointment with Handel's setting of his Scripture collection, posterity has determined that Handel did indeed fulfill Jennens' wish that the composer "lay his whole Genius and Skill upon it, ... as the Subject excels every other Subject. The Subject is *Messiah.*"

© Teresa M. Neff, PhD, 2012 2012-2013 Historically Informed Performance Fellow



#### Lasting Impressions of Messiah

In 1784, the first Handel Commemoration was held at Westminster Abbey. One year later, Abigail Adams and her husband, John, now Ambassador to England, moved to London. Abigail, a prolific correspondent, wrote her impressions upon hearing *Messiah* in 1785:

"... The most powerfull [sic] effects of Musick which I ever experienced. was at Westminster Abbey. The place itself is well calculated to excite solemnity, not only from its ancient and venerable appearance, but from the dignified Dust, Marble and Monuments it contains. Last year it was fitted up with seats and an organ loft sufficiently large to contain six hundred Musicians, which were collected from this and other Countries. This Year the Musick was repeated. It is call'd the celebration of Handles [sic] Musick. The sums collected are deposited and the income is appropriated to the supported of decayed Musicians. There were 5 days set apart for the different performances. I was at the piece call'd the Messiah, and tho a Guinea a ticket, I am sure I never spent one with more satisfaction. It is impossible to describe to you the Solemnity and dignity of the Scene. When it came to the part, the Hallelujah, the whole assembly rose and all the Musicians, every person uncoverd. Only conceive six hundred voices and instruments perfectly chording in one word and one sound! I could scarcely believe myself an inhabitant of Earth. I was one continued shudder from the beginning to the end of the performance."

-Abigail Adams to Elizabeth Cranch London, September 2, 1785 Grosvenor Square

#### **PROGRAM TEXTS**

#### Part the First

#### SINFONY

#### RECITATIVE, ACCOMPANIED (TENOR)

Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God: Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplish'd, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of Him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (ISAIAH XL, 1-3)

#### ARIA (TENOR)

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight and the rough places plain.
(ISAIAH XL, 4)

#### CHORUS

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. And all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. (ISAIAH XL, 5)

#### RECITATIVE, ACCOMPANIED (BASS)

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Yet once a little while, and I will shake the heav'ns and the earth, the sea, and the dry land, all nations I'll shake; and the desire of all nations shall come. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple; even the messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in, behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

(HAGGAI II, 6-7; MALACHI III, 1)

#### ARIA (COUNTERTENOR)

But who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire. (MALACHI III, 2)

#### CHORUS

And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. (MALACHI III, 3)

#### RECITATIVE (COUNTERTENOR)

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel, "God with us." (ISAIAH VII. 14: MATTHEW I. 23)

#### ARIA AND CHORUS (COUNTERTENOR)

O Thou that tellest good tidings to Zion get Thee up into the high mountain;
O Thou that tellest good tidings to
Jerusalem lift up Thy voice with strength,
lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities
of Judah: Behold your God! Arise, shine,
for Thy light is come, and the glory of the
Lord is risen upon Thee. (ISAIAH XL, 9; LX, 1)

#### RECITATIVE, ACCOMPANIED (BASS)

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon Thee, and His glory shall be seen upon Thee. And the Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising. (ISAIAH LX, 2-3)

#### ARIA (BASS)

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. And they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. (ISAIAH IX, 2)

#### CHORUS

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called: Wonderful Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace! (ISAIAH IX. 6)

#### PIFA

#### RECITATIVE (SOPRANO)

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. (LUKE II, 8)

#### RECITATIVE, ACCOMPANIED (SOPRANO)

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. (LUKE II, 9)

#### RECITATIVE (SOPRANO)

And the angel said unto them: Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. (LUKE II, 10-11)

#### RECITATIVE, ACCOMPANIED (SOPRANO)

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heav'nly host, praising God, and saying: (LUKE II, 13)

#### CHORUS

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will toward men. (LUKE II, 14)

#### ARIA (SOPRANO)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King com'th unto thee. He is the righteous Savior, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen. (ZECHARIAH IX, 9-10)

#### RECITATIVE (COUNTERTENOR)

Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. (ISAIAH XXXV, 5-6)

#### ARIA (COUNTERTENOR AND SOPRANO)

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. Come unto Him, all ye that labor, come unto Him all ye that are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him; for He is meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (ISAIAH XL, 11; MATTHEW XI, 28-29)

#### CHORUS

His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light. (MATTHEW XI, 30)

#### Part the Second

#### CHORUS

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. (JOHN 1, 29)

#### ARIA (COUNTERTENOR)

He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: He hid not his face from shame and spitting. (ISAIAH LIII, 3: 1,6)

#### CHORUS

Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. (ISAIAH LIII, 4-5)

#### CHORUS

And with His stripes we are healed. (ISAIAH LIII, 5)

#### CHORUS

All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned ev'ry one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (ISAIAH LIII, 6)

#### RECITATIVE, ACCOMPANIED (TENOR)

All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying: (PSALM XXII, 7)

#### CHORUS

He trusted in God that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him. (PSALM XXII.8)

#### RECITATIVE, ACCOMPANIED (TENOR)

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart; He is full of heaviness; He looked for some to have pity on him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him. (PSALM LXIX, 21)

#### ARIA (TENOR)

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow. (LAMENTATIONS 1, 2)

#### RECITATIVE, ACCOMPANIED (TENOR)

He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of Thy people was He stricken. (ISAIAH LIII, 8)

#### ARIA (TENOR)

But thou didst not leave His soul in hell; nor didst Thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. (PSALM XVI, 10)

#### CHORUS

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts: He is the King of Glory. (PSALM XXV, 7-10)

#### ARIA (SOPRANO)

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. (ROMANS X, 15)

#### CHORUS

Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world. (ROMANS X, 18)

#### ARIA (BASS)

Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and His anointed. (PSALM II, 1-2)

#### CHORUS

Let us break their bonds as under, and cast away their yokes from us. (PSALM II, 3)

#### RECITATIVE (TENOR)

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn, the Lord shall have them in derision. (PSALM II, 4)

#### ARIA (TENOR)

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. (PSALM II, 9)

#### CHORUS

Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The Kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah. (REVELATION XIX, 6; XI, 15; XIX, 16)

#### Part the Third

#### ARIA (SOPRANO)

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And tho' worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep. (JOB XIX, 25-26; I CORINTHIANS XV, 20)

#### CHORUS

Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (I CORINTHIANS XV, 21, 22)

#### RECITATIVE, ACCOMPANIED (BASS)

Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be chang'd, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. (I CORINTHIANS XV. 51-52)

#### ARIA (BASS)

The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be rais'd incorruptible, and we shall be chang'd. (I CORINTHIANS XV, 52)

#### RECITATIVE (COUNTERTENOR)

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written; Death is swallow'd up in victory. (I Corinthians XV, 54)

#### DUET (COUNTERTENOR AND TENOR)

O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. (I CORINTHIANS XV. 55-57)

#### CHORUS

But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (I CORINTHIANS XV, 55-57)

#### ARIA (SOPRANO)

If God is for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us. (ROMANS VIII, 31, 33–34)

#### CHORUS

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honor, glory, and pow'r be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. (REVELATION V, 12-13)

#### CHORUS

Amen.





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### BICENTENNIAL BEAT THE "HALLELUJAH" CHORUS

From the first performance of the Handel and Haydn Society, the "Hallelujah" chorus from *Messiah* was programmed, often as the final work. Through the years, the chorus concluded benefit concerts and other concerts celebrating civic events, making the "Hallelujah" chorus a mainstay in the cultural life of Boston. In programming it apart from the rest of the oratorio, H&H has substantively contributed to the reinterpretation of this chorus as a stand-alone work. Here are some examples from the early years of H&H:

- **1815** On December 25, the first concert of Handel and Haydn Society concludes with "Hallelujah" chorus.
- 1817 On July 5, the "Hallelujah" chorus concludes a concert "at the request of the committee of the Town of Boston in Honor of the President of the United States [James Monroe], who was present—with many civic and military characters of distinction." (from the minutes of the Board meeting).
- **1859** On February 22, the "Hallelujah" chorus is sung as part of celebrations for the birth of George Washington, held under the auspices of the Mercantile Library Association.
- **1871** On December 10, the "Hallelujah" chorus is sung at a concert in honor of Grand Duke Alexis of Russia.
- **1882** On March 27, the Grand Concert in Aid of the Russian Jewish Refugees Society concludes with the "Hallelujah" chorus.
- 1907 In "Old-Home Week / Symphony Hall Exercises / Tuesday, July 30, 1907" (from original program), the "Hallelujah" chorus is followed by a poem by Mrs. Julia Ward Howe and the singing of My Country, 'Tis of Thee, in which the audience is invited to participate.

### HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY 2012-2013 SEASON

#### Bach Christmas Oratorio

Dec 13 & 16, 2012 at NEC's Jordan Hall

John Finney, *conductor*Period Instrument Orchestra and Chorus

BACH Cantatas I, II, and VI from Christmas Oratorio

#### Purcell The Indian Queen

Jan 25, 2013 at NEC's Jordan Hall Jan 27, 2013 at Sanders Theatre

Harry Christophers, conductor Zachary Wilder, tenor Jonathan Best, baritone Period Instrument Orchestra and Chorus

PURCELL "The scene of the drunken poet"
from The Fairy Queen

DANIEL PURCELL "The Masque of Hymen"
from The Indian Queen

PURCELL "The Frost Scene" from
King Arthur

PURCELL The Indian Queen (Music for
Acts I-V)

#### Haydn in Paris

Feb 22 & 24, 2013 at Symphony Hall

Harry Christophers, conductor Aisslinn Nosky, violin Period Instrument Orchestra

HAYDN Symphony No. 6, *Le matin* HAYDN Violin Concerto No. 4 HAYDN Overture to *L'isola disabitata* HAYDN Symphony No. 82, *The Bear* 

#### Beethoven Symphony No. 7

Mar 15 & 17, 2013 at Symphony Hall

Richard Egarr, conductor Eric Hoeprich, clarinet Period Instrument Orchestra

MOZART Masonic Funeral Music, K. 477 MOZART Clarinet Concerto BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 7

#### Vivaldi Virtuosi

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Ian Watson, *director and harpsichord* Period Instrument Orchestra

VIVALDI Sinfonia, *Il coro delle Muse*LOCATELLI Introduzione in D Major,
Op. 4. No. 5

AVISON Concerto Grosso No. 6 in D Major after Scarlatti

GEMINIANI Concerto grosso detto La follia
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TORELLI Sinfonia for two violins and cello DURANTE Concerto a cinque in A Major VIVALDI Concerto in B Minor for four violins

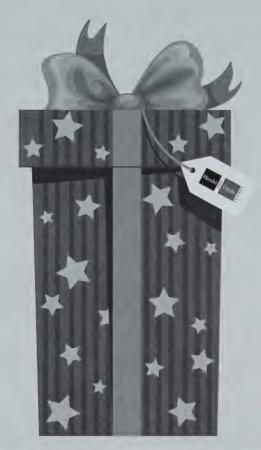
#### Handel Jephtha

May 3 & 5, 2013 at Symphony Hall

Robert Murray, tenor (Jephtha)
Catherine Wyn-Rogers, mezzo-soprano (Storgè)
Joélle Harvey, soprano (Iphis)
William Purefoy, countertenor (Hamor)
Woodrow Bynum, bass (Zebul)
Teresa Wakim, soprano (Angel)
Period Instrument Orchestra and Chorus

Harry Christophers, conductor

Partial programs listed. For full program order and information, visit handelandhaydn.org. Programming, artists, and dates subject to change.



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In the spring of 2013, Artistic Director Harry Christophers will take the H&H Period Instrument Orchestra and Chorus on tour to California with Handel's oratorio *Jephtha* and Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. H&H premiered *Jephtha* in the US and has not performed it since 1867; Californians will be the first to hear H&H perform the work in 146 years. The West Coast tour features four concerts in Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara, from April 26–May 1, 2013.

We are organizing a Patrons' Tour to allow you to join us for this oncein-a-lifetime experience.

For more information, contact Wei Jing Saw, Executive Assistant, at wjsaw@handelandhaydn.org or 617 262 1815.

#### **Tour Schedule**

WEST COAST

Fri, Apr 26, 2013: The Four Seasons First Congregational Church, Berkeley Presented by Cal Performances

**Sat, April 27, 2013:** *Jephtha*First Congregational Church, Berkeley *Presented by Cal Performances* 

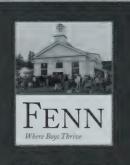
Tues, Apr 30, 2013: *Jephtha*Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles *Presented by Los Angeles Philharmonic* 

Wed, May 1, 2013: The Four Seasons The Granada Theatre, Santa Barbara Presented by UCSB Arts & Lectures

BOSTON

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HARRY CHRISTOPHERS COACHES VAP SINGERS AT A REHEARSAL FOR BACH ST, MATTHEW PASSION, PHOTO: KYLE T, HEMINGWAY

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Support the Educational Outreach Program with a gift to the Annual Fund. handelandhaydn.org/support

#### **Upcoming Performances**

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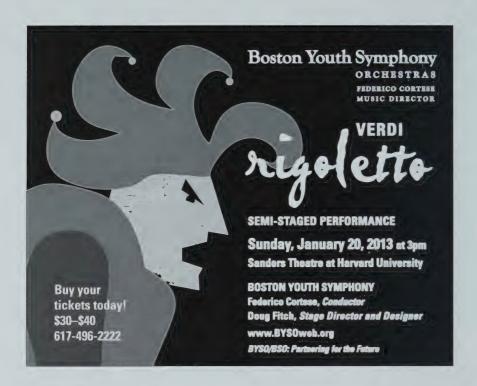
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